533 their praises and beating fiercely on their drums in the hope of receiving a few cowries, kola nuts, or at least some beer.

326 306 The smiths (saba), by which is meant those who work with iron, extract the metal from the ore and make it into hoes and hatchets. They sometimes work with wood, as in other parts of the Sudan, but usually this industry is carried out by members of another guild. The jewellers make bracelets, file teeth, repair worn hoes, etc. They are not smiths, properly speaking, and anyone may exercise their trade.

767 The undertakers (lada) offer gifts to the spirits of the deceased on the day of death or its anniversary (koure). They also lay the corpse in the grave, and if death was due to illness, it is impossible to proceed with the burial without them. But anyone may dig the grave and carry the corpse. We shall discuss the undertakers again when funerals are described.

Chapter 2. The Family

596 The structure of the Roman family and the power granted to the paterfamilias, its very foundation, have been greatly and justly admired. Something like the paterfamilias is to be found among the Mossi. Would that we also found the Roman matron! As we have seen above, every Mossi is subject to the Moro Naba, a province chief, a canton chief, and a village chief. He is also subject in a more immediate sense to the head of his family, and he can do nothing without his consent. If he wishes to marry, he consults the family head, in whose household his bride will lodge when she arrives in the village. On the other hand, the man who wishes to give his daughter in marriage never does so without consulting his family head, at whose house the girl will stay before she goes to live with her husband.

[551] The family is thus very tightly organized among the Mossi. Each family has a name which is seldom used; if one of its members was ever naba, the name derives from that of the first naba. Members of [582] the same family may not intermarry, and usually they all have the ●184 same kisgou (prohibition), whether the term designates a totem, a taboo, or something else altogether. The head of the family is its oldest member. Upon his death, the authority is transferred not to his

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé-animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 [775] The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé [197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no koure. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake [582] (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

577 673 [839] insofar as they involve an offense to justice. /88/ I do not speak of unnatural practices, which are almost unknown. When theft, murder, even insults, blows and wounds are punished, they are punished as injustices. Calumny is abhorred, and it is a very serious insult to say that someone has slandered someone else. A Mossi will not forgive an insult against his mother, because it is prejudicial to the family honor and hence to himself. In dealing with the natives, therefore, it is necessary to be careful and not to commit any injustices. They are very sensitive to this; while they accept a just punishment without complaint when the offense has been proved, they reject indignantly any accusation which cannot be proved, even when it is well founded.

577 784 In addition to this general morality, many things are forbidden not because they are evil, but because they entail baleful consequences. The taboos (kisgou to the Mossi, from kisé, "to forbid") are almost innumerable. They may be divided into two classes: permanent kisgou, which affect the whole family, and personal and transitory kisgou.

784 The former usually consist of a prohibition to eat a certain animal or to do a certain thing. Thus some nabas are forbidden to meet, to see one another, and if they disregard this prohibition, one of them will die before the year is over. This prohibition is easily explained by the incessant wars which were formerly waged between important chiefs, and their fear of being poisoned or done away with in some other way by one of their enemies. Another instance: a Mossi goes to war on a frisky horse and he is forced to flee. His foes are about to seize him, and he owes his escape to the swiftness of his mount. When he returns home, he decrees that the horse will be a sacred animal to him and to his descendants, and that henceforth all his children and their children must treat horses well and may not eat their flesh under penalty of blindness or leprosy. This is the extent of the prohibition. The horse is not considered a guardian animal, no sacrifices are offered to it, and the Mossi do not call it tangandé (guardian animal of the village) or siga((soul-animal), but kisgou (prohibition).

784 262 Sometimes the kisgou affects only certain members of the family. A father has been ill after eating dog flesh on two or three occasions. He consults the sorcerer, who states that dog flesh is forbidden to him and to his children, but not to other members of his family. A person

784 262 born among the Peul, to whom dog flesh is forbidden, may have the dog as kisgou. Sometimes the kisgou concerns only him, his son, and grandson and not his other descendants, because the son and grandson will follow his own soul, while the soul of the other descendants will follow that of his mother, their great-grandmother, to whom dog flesh is not forbidden. A sorcerer's reasoning against which there is no argument!

/89/ This kind of kisgou is the more binding of the two, but it may be terminated if the person who established it offers the proper sacrifices, or if one of his descendants, of his own will, releases himself and his children from it. Thus the family of the Saman'Naba, Prime Minister of Koupéla, has the hare as kisgou. When the naba saw his Christian brothers and son eat hare flesh with impunity, without becoming blind or leprous, he took to eating it himself without ill effects.

784 869 753 Parents teach their children about the various family kisgou and instill the proper awe into them so they will not eat these animals. Involuntary disregard of one's kisgou may lead to illness, and the sorcerer consulted indicates what has to be done and what sacrifice must be offered to the tangandé to obtain his forgiveness. If the slip was deliberate, if it showed contempt, no forgiveness is possible.

784 758 262 The second kind of kisgou is quite special and personal. It consists of the various prohibitions imposed by the sorcerers on a sick person. A certain kind of meat or sauce is forbidden to the patient, or he may not drink water containing millet flour, or he may not eat millet or bean cakes. This is how a poor rachitic child with a heart disease was successively forbidden practically every kind of food. His relatives had the greatest difficulty finding those foods that were not forbidden to him, and eventually he died of starvation. All such kisgou terminate of course with the illness that caused them, unless the disease is incurable and lasts to the end of the patient's life.

Chapter 2. The Cult

000 If we define religion with Mgr. Le Roy (1) as "The body of beliefs,

1. Mgr. Le Roy, op. cit., p. 49.

527 observed everywhere. In Bélousa, it is called kytouara. The name kibsa, on the other hand, is known everywhere, but special circumstances may prevent its celebration. Thus the warriors of one canton were defeated on that day, consider the kibsa unpropitious, and no longer celebrate it.

mention briefly.

The naky (naba ky, "naba's millet") is the naba's personal feast. It is always celebrated on a Saturday, like all the naba's ceremonies. It is proclaimed at market by the village-crier twenty-one days beforehand. [182] Seven days before the feast, the naba sacrifices a goat on the threshing floor and eats it on the spot after it has been roasted. The three nabas assigned as keepers of the naba's millet thresh a little grain, and every day they return to the grounds to thresh a little more until the day of the festivities. The quantity of millet thus flailed does not fill more than two baskets.

On the day of the feast, early in the morning, the high ministers go with their retinues to greet the naba: "May God be with you; may God grant you to see the year through!" A procession is formed and proceeds to the naba's threshing floor. His sisters and wives take part of the millet threshed on the previous days and carry it /98/, shrieking and dancing, to a granary located outside the naba's soukala. Then everyone drinks copiously.

Two days later, in the evening, another ceremony takes place. The naba's relatives go to the threshing floor and wrap the remaining millet in grass stalks; the bundle is carried to the sound of drums with jesting, shrieks, and dancing, as on the day of a burial. The millet is placed in the granary alongside the grain brought in on the day of the feast, and a sheep and a chicken are sacrificed nearby and [182] shared among those present. The naba does not partake of this flesh. Actually he hides throughout the ceremony, for if he saw the pro- [184] cession he would die.

What is the origin of this custom, which reminds the naba that in spite of all his power he is mortal like his subjects? What is the origin of that other custom, mentioned earlier, of building near his dwelling the hut where he will be buried? The Romans used to remind their